A DISASTER AT SEA

I speak ze Engleesh vera bad. Ees it not so?"

"It is a very difficult lagnuage?" she responded.

"So, so. It ees like ze sea zat goes dis way and zat, vut-vut you calls it?"

"Choppy," she replied.

"Si, si, zat is what you calls my Engleesh—choppy."

"You are mistaken; I call it nothing of the kind. You asked me about the sea. I said nothing about your use of the language. Of course, it is very difficult for one to take up a new speech. You do quite well."

For this he was grateful, and he was framing his thankfulness when a buoyant man of aggressive size and healthfulness approached. The sea had no terrors for him. He trod the deck like one born to command, not afraid of storm either on land or elsewhere.

He had one of those large framed and hopeful personalities which belong to the successful American character, and he looked as if he could buy the ship without severely intrenching upon his fortune. He bowed in a familiar yet businesslike manner and said something to the young lady. She excused herself and made toward the cabin door.

The foreigner and the American stood in talk for a few moments and then parted, as the American frankly did not like to exhaust his patience upon the stumbling sentences of the polite and very deferential Italian.

That night in the smoking room the American, Mr. John Henry Martindale, had made himself more popular than usual by his good stories and liberality. Count Fricadelli was consuming cigarettes on a neighboring sofa.

Precisely at 10:30, as was the custom, Mr. Martindale arose, looked at his watch to see if the ship's clock was attending strictly to its duties, and bade a cheery good-night to every one, and then quite settled for a moment upon the room.

There was a swish of the waves without, and there was the roll of the boat, but all else seemed strangely silenced as if a little storm had passed in eventide, and the twilight had settled down. But it did not last long.

"Martindale is a regular old brick," suddenly exclaimed an Englishman, whose voice filled the entire apartment. "He is a true American, and while people say that he is lucky, I am sure he deserves everything he has got. Certainly there is nobody who enjoys life more, or who can tackle a situation with better humor or bigger nerve. I was in Cariopolis when he had the street railway fight, and the lines were being changed from the old horse-cars to the electric system. The deals in that city must have netted him from one to two million dollars, and then he took up two other lines and began his manipulations. He succeeded the third time, and then on the fourth affair when they tried to outdo him in another city he took the other track and made more than in any other deal he had attempted. He is worth ten million dollars."

"Who will get all that money?" inquired a young person, who should have been in bed.

"His niece, I suppose," was the reply. "He has no children, you know, and his wife, who is with him, has been ill ever since we left New York."

Ten million dollars! Count Fricadelli could scarcely believe his ears. It meant wealth beyond anything his imagination could comprehend. Ten millions! Fifty million francs! It was grand, it was magnificent!

On the next morning when he saw the same young lady again pacing up and down the deck, he put all his energy into the English he could summon, and with profuse apologies made comments upon the sea, the earth, the sky, and all that therein is.

She was pleasant, and he was enthusiastic, and when the buoyant Mr. Martindale came out again to say something to her, and after she had disappeared, the count let his enthusiasm bubble forth in many earnest but somewhat broken syllables.

"Mees Wiltsong, she is so charming."

"She is a very pleasant young lady," replied Mr. Martindale, and then he walked down the deck with a broad grin on his face. After that he called her "Mees Wiltsong."

The count was very attentive, very persistent, very gallant, and every time Miss Wilson appeared on deck, in some mysterious manner he managed to be near to offer every attention that gallantry could suggest, that invention could find.

He was undeniably handsome, and his English improved with the voyage. It was as if the shaking up had rubbed the roughest edges ofl his syllables. When Miss Wilson was not about he cultivated Mr. Martindale and the burly millionare enjoyed the attention.

Finally, one day, in a great burst of confession and confidence, the count said: "Meester Martindale, I would be so glad to pay my attentions to your niece."

"Why certainly. Go ahead," exclaimed Mr. Martindale, with a laugh that was on the point of an explosion that might have shaken the ship if it had found its full vent.

And so it went on, and the climax came one lovely morning when the great vessel passed Queenstown on her way to the old country.

The young lady with the flush of health deep in her cheeks, her eyes as clear as the skies, and her whole being a personification of vigor and beautiful happiness, was standing in a corner by herself when the count approached and told her that he had found that for which he had searched the earth in vain—the object of his love—the most adorable of women, whom he loved with an unselfishness that no language could express.

He certainly expressed it very inadequately in his broken English. But as that journey seemed quickly ending he grasped the chance with all the ardor of a man determined to win before the ship was docked.

While he was speaking she was gazing toward the horizon, and there was upon her face a half-smile like the play of sunlight upon the face of a goddess.

Finally he excalimed:

"I have ze permission of Mr. Martindale, your uncle, to speak zus wiz you."

"Of Mr. Martindale, my uncle!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Mees," he replied, "of him; he knows of it. You may ask him; he will comprehend."

She said nothing, but seeing the rotund face of the millionaire coming down the deck advanced to meet him, and without a word came back with him where the count was standing.

"Mr. Martindale, she said, very soberly, "I understand Count Fricadelli to say that you are my uncle, and that you have given him permission to speak to me upon a somewhat personal subject."

Mr. Martindale smiled broadly and replied:

"The count must be mistaken. I have never claimed to be your uncle, although I should be very proud if I were."

The count was becoming strangely agitated, but he said:

"Meester Martindale, you said I might pay my attentions to your niece."

"Well, count, I have not the slightest objections to that, but it happens that the only niece I have lives in Dakota and has the finest family that any man ever saw."

"Then Mees Wiltsong," mumbled the poor man on the verge of collapse —"'Mees Wiltsong,'" said Mr. Martindale, taking the words from him, "is a most delightful and most capable professional nurse who, I am sure, will be most attentive to my wife during our little trip to Europe, and she is a lady whom I can cordially recommend to any one needing her services—after we have done with her."

It would be hard to follow the rest of this disaster, but "Mees Wiltsong" and Mr. Martindale were laughing after the count had found solitude in his cabin, from which he did not emerge until the stewards were almost obliged to put him off the ship at Liverpool.—Illustrated Bits.

Hay Caps.

Haying time is at hand. If you are not supplied with hay caps, you should attend to the matter at once. There is no other State where there is so much rainy weather in haying time as in Florida. With a set of good hay caps, you can make hay while the sun shines, and be entirely independent of the weather. The following directions for making them are from Farm and Ranch:

In curing cowpea, alfalfa and some other hays that do not turn water readily we have found cloth hay caps of real value. This system renders the hay makers' work more leisurely and guarantees very largely against loss or weather damage. Should we have unbroken sunshine in haying there is of course no need for hay cocks of any sort.

Having used paper felt hay caps, cloth caps and yong hay substitute for caps we conclude that the safest plan, economy considered, for the farmer who is growing hay as a business, is to provide a supply of cloth caps and carry them over from year to year. These will save their cost many times over during a season when alfalfa, clover of any kind, cowpeas or soja beans are made into hay.

Take strong muslin 36 to 40 inches wide or select a light weight osnamurg. Tear off lengths double the width and stich two widtths together. This "cap measuring 72 or 80 inches square must be weighted or pegged on to the cock to make it safe. Some tie strings to each corner of cap and attach stones or pieces of metal as weights. We prefer a small peg six to ten inches long attached to each corner by strings, instead of the weights. These caps will turn rain. We have seen it stated that the cheapest grades of cheese cloth have been used for caps by giving each a coat of paint. This appears to add both expense and labor to the proposition. We prefer to use plain drilling or osnaburg.

The cocks or round piles should be tall for caps as large as above suggested. Each pile should contain at least 500 pounds of hay when cured, should stand up six feet high and be raked smooth with fork that pockets and irregular surfaces may be avoided. It pays where quality of hay is considered to use hay caps on the crops indicated. It will surely add $1.50 or $2 to the market and feed value of the hay while at the same time protecting hay crops in large measure against losses due to weathering. The reason that hays made from the grasses do not require the use of caps is due to their well-known ability to turn water when properly cocked or piled.